

fires in recent years, which is why the fire prevention message is so important. Forest fires burn millions of acres, destroy homes and businesses, and, worse yet, take the lives of wildland firefighters. As we remember all too well, 2000 was the worst fire year on record since 1957, and subsequent years have not been much better.

Last year's devastating fires prompted us to finally agree to the passage of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. I have a feeling Smokey Bear would be proud of that accomplishment, and know that his wildfire program had never been more important. While we now work to improve our forests with this new law, Smokey's message must still resound. This message of forest fire prevention has undoubtedly helped to reduce the number of forest acres lost annually to wildfire. By what measure, I can never know. However, to suggest that he has not made a significant difference would be amiss.

The injured cub discovered in 1950, our Smokey Bear, eventually arrived at the National Zoo in Washington, DC, where he would become the living symbol for fire prevention. He resided in the National Zoo for 26 years until he passed on November 9, 1976. Most appropriately he was returned to his old roaming grounds and to his home town to be laid to rest.

Capitan is a small town in Lincoln County, nestled between those Capitan and Sacramento Mountains of central New Mexico. This beautiful place is full of wonderful people who love the land and refer to Smokey Bear as "Capitan's favorite son." Each year Capitan residents celebrate his memory with the Fourth of July Smokey Bear Stampede, but this year is a special tribute. The village is hosting a special 60th birthday celebration May 7-9. Much of the 3-day festivity will take place at the historical park named in Smokey Bear's honor and along what is now aptly named Smokey Bear Boulevard.

I pay tribute to the people of Capitan in this RECORD—they have gone to great lengths to preserve the story and meaning of Smokey Bear. I also salute the USDA, the Forest Service, the National Association of State Foresters, and the Ad Council for supporting this program all these years. May the initiative's success only be a prelude to future forest preservation and wildfire prevention, and may Smokey Bear and all he represents forever remain.●

AMADOR VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL'S INVOLVEMENT IN WE THE PEOPLE

● Ms. BOXER. Mr. President, I would like to recognize a remarkable group of young people who will be traveling to Washington, DC next week, May 1-3, to participate in the national finals of "We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution." This program consists of competitions in which students field questions that test their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution.

I am pleased to announce that students from Amador Valley High School in Pleasanton, CA will be representing the State of California in this competition. With the help of their civics teacher, Matthew Campbell, these students have studied for months to prepare for their role as experts testifying on constitutional issues in a simulated congressional hearing.

These students have all worked very hard through first the congressional, then state, and now national competitions. The members of this year's civics team are Nichole Barlow, Anna Currin, Tony D'Albora, Logan Daniels, Shelley DeFord, Michael Gondkoff, Gabe Ivey, Nate Koppikar, Kristin MacDonnell, Sonia Markovic, Jennifer Martin, Lacie McFarland, Shawna McGrath, Nicole Melton, Barry Ripley, Elisabeth Schulze, Sunaina Selam, Kent Stander, and Jae Yoo. I congratulate each of them for coming this far and send them my best wishes for next week's competition.

It is very encouraging to see young people take such a profound interest in studying those ideas and principles which are at the heart of our democracy and of our country. I am certain that this type of involvement will only lead to a deeper interest and that it will build strong citizens and strong leaders for our country's future.●

HONORING AN ARMY LEGEND

● Mr. MILLER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the Commanding General, United States Army Forces Command, General Larry R. Ellis. General Ellis has served as the Commanding General of U.S. Army Forces Command from November 19, 2001, to May 7, 2004.

General Ellis, an outstanding American Soldier from the great State of Maryland, will soon complete over 35 years of selfless service to this great Nation in the United States Army. General Ellis' dedication to our Soldiers, commitment to excellence, and performance of duty has been extraordinary throughout his career, a lifetime of service culminating in an assignment as the Commanding General of the largest major command in the United States Army. He will retire on July 1, 2004.

During more than 35 years in uniform, General Ellis served in a succession of command and staff positions worldwide. As a junior officer, he served in combat in the Republic of Vietnam, and subsequently with troop units in positions of increasing responsibility throughout the continental United States, Europe, and the Republic of Korea.

While the Deputy Director for Strategic Planning and Policy at U.S. Pacific Command, and as the Assistant Chief of Staff, J3, for United States Forces Korea, General Ellis supervised the training and performance of American military forces throughout the Far East.

He commanded units at every echelon of the Army, including the First

Armored Division in Germany and when deployed as the Multinational Division (North), in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a combined task force that included units from 13 nations. In this capacity General Ellis coordinated European military and civil efforts to implement an extensive array of operations and programs to provide stability and restore favorable economic and political conditions in that war-torn region.

As the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, General Ellis oversaw multi-year, multi-billion dollar programs supporting United States Army budget strategic objectives, and executed annual operating budgets of more than \$15 billion across 16 major subordinate organizations. He directed the development of comprehensive strategic plans supporting the Army's continued success across the next three decades by resourcing plans through decisive application of deliberate management systems, strategic planning processes, environmental assessments, and periodic situational appraisals to ensure full integration and compliance with strictly defined performance objectives. He spearheaded the Army's effort to translate the senior leadership's Strategic Vision into an executable Transformation Campaign Plan.

Soon after the United States went to war in 2001, General Ellis assumed command of U.S. Army Forces Command, the Army's largest major command. He aggressively orchestrated the training, mobilization, and deployment of more than 500,000 Soldiers and more than a million tons of equipment to locations worldwide which represents the largest mobilization since the Korean War. In addition to providing resources and directing long-range planning to move Army forces, he maintained close operational control of ongoing events to ensure his subordinate units could respond to emerging trends and circumstances. The strategic communications plan he instigated to engage disparate and complex audiences to include academia, Congress, local public officials, industry, and members of the Department of Defense, ensured that his commands' operations were understood and supported.

General Ellis holds degrees from Morgan State University, B.S., 1969, and Indiana University, M.S., 1975. His honors include the NAACP National Service Award, 1999; Honorary Doctor of Law, Morgan State University, 2000; Honorary Master of Strategic Studies, U.S. Army War College, 2001; Distinguished Alumni Service Award, Indiana University, 2003. His military awards include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Army Distinguished Service Medal, and the Combat Infantryman Badge.

His three and a half decades of service earned for General Ellis a reputation as one of the Department of Defense's most forward thinking and insightful leaders. General Ellis represents the epitome of what Army leaders, Soldiers, and the country expect